

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3197

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5513

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, IR
SUBJ: MILITARY COURT REFORM LEGISLATION

REF: (A) TEHRAN 5337, (B) TEHRAN 5444

1. IN PURSUIT OF MY INITIAL ROUND OF PROTOCOLARY CALLS ON SENIOR IRANIAN OFFICIALS, I VISITED JUNE 22 WITH SENATE PRESIDENT JAFAR SHARIF-EMAMI. HE IS AN OLD POLITICAL WARHORSE, FORMER PRIME MINISTER, CONFIDANT OF THE SHAH AND EIGHT-TIME SENATE PRESIDENT. HE HAS FOR YEARS ENJOYED A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS EMBASSY, HAS ONE DAUGHTER MARRIED TO AN AMERICAN IN TEXAS, AND A SON ABOUT TO ENTER GRADUATE SCHOOL IN THE US. WHILE HE IS BY NO MEANS ONE OF OUR MOST TRUSTED COLLABORATORS, HE HAS A VALUABLE INFLUENCE WHICH WE WISH TO RETAIN AND ELABORATE.

2. I TALKED WITH SHARIF-EMAMI ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTION ON THE MILITARY COURT REFORM BILL (REFTELS). HE SAID THE MAJLES HAD ALREADY PASSED THE BILL WITHOUT AMENDMENT AND HAD MOVED IT TO THE SENATE. ALTHOUGH THE SENATE WAS TECHNICALLY ADJOURNED FOR THE SUMMER, IT WOULD RECONVENE ON AN AD HOC BASIS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO CONSIDER THIS AND OTHER PRIORITY PIECES OF LEGISLATION.

3. IN THIS CONTEXT, I POINTED OUT THAT THERE WOULD
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BE CONSIDERABLE FOREIGN INTEREST, ESPECIALLY IN THE US, IN THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL. I SAID THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM OF THE MANNER IN WHICH JURIDICAL AND DETENTION PROCESSES WERE CARRIED OUT IN THE IRANIAN MILITARY COURT SYSTEM. SHARIF-EMAMI, WHO HAS THE REPUTATION FOR RECOGNIZING A BANDWAGON WHEN IT ROLLS NEAR HIM, AVOWED THAT HE HAD BEEN CONTINUALLY COUNSELLING THE SHAH TO MAKE THESE

CHANGES. HE SAID THAT "FORM" WAS VERY IMPORTANT IN CRIMINAL MATTERS. I SAID WE LIKED TO THINK OF IT AS "DUE PROCESS". HE AGREED THAT WAS A GOOD TERM.

4. I THEN ASKED ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, WHICH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE PARLIAMENT, BUT ABOUT WHICH LITTLE HAD BEEN HEARD. THE SENATE PRESIDENT SAID IT WAS KEPT BUSY BY CONSIDERING AND ANSWERING CORRESPONDENCE FROM SUCH ENTITIES AS SEC GEN WALDHEIM AND OTHERS WHO WRITE ON THE SUBJECT. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO A PAEAN OF PRAISE FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE SAID THIS POLICY ENHANCED THE US REPUTATION. FRIENDS OF THE US WOULD FIND IT DESIRABLE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO US LEADERSHIP ON THE ISSUE. ONLY THE SOVIETS AND THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WOULD BE ISOLATED AND EMBARRASSED.

5. AFTER THIS SURGE OF EMPATHY, I SAID I THOUGHT THE US SENATE WOULD ENJOY HEARING SHARIF-EMAMI'S VIEWS AND ASKED WHETHER HE HAD ANY REGULAR CORRESPONDENTS IN THAT AUGUST BODY. HE SAID HE HAD A FEW ACQUAINTANCES, BUT NO CORRESPONDENTS. HE LATER SAID (AFTER A FEW MINUTES INTERVAL IN WHICH OTHER MATTERS WERE DISCUSSED) THAT HE WOULD WELCOME THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE US SENATE. I SAID I WOULD INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITIES.

6. COMMENT: IT OCCURS TO ME THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR
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VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, AS SHARIF-EMAMI'S OPPOSITE NUMBER, TO INITIATE A SYSTEM OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIM. GIVEN SHARIF-EMAMI'S DIRECT ACCESS TO THE SHAH, THIS WOULD PROVIDE US AN ADDITIONAL CHANNEL FOR GETTING US VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO THE DECISION-MAKING LEVEL. IT WOULD ALSO PERMIT CERTAIN LESS FORMALIZED GIVE-AND-TAKE TO OCCUR IN A MANNER WHICH MIGHT PROVIDE MORE LATITUDE THAN PURELY EXECUTIVE BRANCH DIPLOMACY. THE APPROPRIATE OCCASION FOR THE INITIATION OF THIS GAMBIT MIGHT BE THE PASSAGE BY THE PARLIAMENT OF THE MILITARY COURT REFORM BILL.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: IF THE DEPARTMENT THINKS WELL OF THE PROPOSAL IN PARAGRAPH 6, PLEASE DISCUSS WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT AND ADVISE THIS EMBASSY OF PREFERRED PROCEDURES.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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